

REMARKS
ON A
PLAY,
CALL'D,
The Conscious Lovers,
A
COMEDY.

*For, changing Rules, of late, as if Men writ
In spite of Reason, Nature, Art, and Wit,
Our Poets make us Laugh at Tragedy,
And with their Comedies they make us cry.*

Prologue to the Rehearsal.

*It appears from Consideration of ancient,
as well as modern Time, that the Cause
and Interest of Criticks is the same with
that of Wit, Learning, and good Sense.*

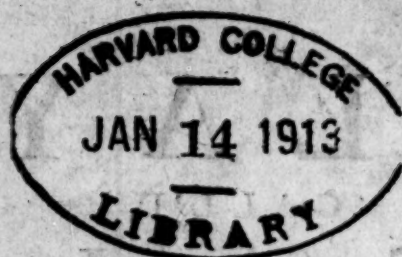
The late Earl of Shaftsbury's Characteristicks, Vol. i. p. 260.

By Mr. DENNIS.

L O N D O N,

Printed for T. WARNER at the Black-Boy in
Pater-Noster-Row. MDCCXXIII.

Price One Shilling.



*Gift of
John Craig*

BOUND MAY 7 1913

By Mr. D. H. N. 12

To the Right Honourable

ROBERT WALPOLE Esq;

First Lord Commissioner of the

T R E A S U R Y,

Chancellor of the *Exchequer*,

And One of His Majesty's

Most Honourable Privy Council.

S I R,



Take the Liberty of addressing the following Sheets to you, without the Formality of asking your Leave: I have for a long Time thought that such a Formality proposes an implicate Bargain, which is very liable to be turn'd into Ridicule. This was the Opinion
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The DEDICATION.

of the late Earl of *Hallifax*, who had receiv'd more Addresses of this Nature, than any Man of his Time. The End of this Epistle, is, to return you my humble Thanks, for Obligations past; for Obligations laid not only upon me, but upon my Country, when you endeavour'd to serve it so warmly, by opposing that desperate Scheme which had like to have proved so fatal to it, and by advising, after the Mischief was done, the Use of Lenitives, rather than of Corrosives, which might have thrown all Things into Confusion. Another Intention of this Address, is, to implore your Protection for the expiring Arts; for those noble Arts in which you have been educated, and which have rais'd you to this envied Heighth, as it were, on purpose that you may prove their Protector and Preserver. You are not to be told, Sir, and it would be easy to prove it to the rest of the World, that the Studies of Humanity in *Great Britain* have flourish'd with the Stage; and that with
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The DEDICATION.

the Stage they must in time decline. I speak not only of every other Branch of Poetry, but even of that manly Eloquence which appears so conspicuous in you, whenever you are pleas'd to display its Charms to an August Assembly. But the Stage is just upon the Point of sinking, unless an Arm so powerful as yours shall vouchsafe to support it. A *Wat Tyler*, a *Jack Straw*, and a *Jack Cade of Parnassus*, have by Encroachments got the entire Direction of it from its easy Patentee, and seem resolv'd, like their Name-fakes of old, to advance the Rabble and Scum of *Parnassus*, and to oppress or demolish all whom God and Nature have plac'd above them. The Dramatick Piece on which I have writ the following Remarks, has, with a thousand Faults, and a thousand Weaknesses, been palm'd upon the World by shameful Artifices for a Wonder of Art and Nature: And that no one may presume to detect the Fraud, the Author has insolently dar'd to fly for Protection

The DEDICATION.

to the King himself. But the Author ought to have known, that it can never be the Design of so good and so wise a King, to shelter Error from the Attacks of Reason: He ought to have known, that the King has declar'd his Intention to encourage real Merit, that Learning and Arts may flourish; by which Glory may accrue to His Reign, and Honour to *Great Britain*.

You know very well, Sir, that there has not been in *Europe* these thousand Years a Prince more haughty than *Lewis XIV.* a Prince more jealous of his Authority, and more ambitious of Glory: You know, Sir, that almost all his Poetical Subjects, who knew the darling Passion of his Soul, address'd some of their Works to him. You know very well, Sir, that most of them had been rewarded by him: And yet when *BOILEAU*, in a Discourse address'd to that King himself, and afterwards prefixed to his Works, expos'd and ridiculed the greatest Part of those Pieces; you know very well, Sir, that that discern-
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The DEDICATION.

ing Prince, who saw that his true Interest and his solid Glory depended upon the Advancement of Arts, and upon the encouraging real Merit, was so far from being offended with *BOILEAU* for the Liberty he took in that Discourse, that it recommended him to his Favour.

I do believe, from my very Soul, that 'tis the Intention of so wise a Prince as the King, to encourage Arts and Learning; and I should have believ'd it, tho' the King had never told us so, because I know it to be his true Interest. And therefore I can never believe that 'tis the King's Intention any more to patronize Ignorance and Error in the Writings of his Subjects, than to protect their Vices and Follies of any other Kind. For Ignorance and Error, and Vice and Folly, must estrange the Hearts of his Subjects from him; only Ignorance and Error, and Vice and Folly, can favour and indulge that Superstition, and that false Religion, which are his mortal Enemies.

And

The DEDICATION.

And yet it has happen'd, by I know not what sort of Caprice of Fortune, or of Fate, that Arts and Learning have, of late, sensibly, if not precipitately, declin'd. Never did such a Crowd of ill Plays and miserable Poems appear in so short a Time: We have hardly seen one good one. And what is yet more surpris'g, the most stupid of all those Plays and Poems, have been address'd to the King himself. One would swear, that the Authors were wild enough to expect, that Pensions, Gratuities, and Salaries, should be appointed to encourage Stupidity, and to mortify Sense and Merit. The very Boast and Glory of the *British* Muse is Comedy, in which *Great Britain* excels every other Country: Nay, we can shew more good, and more entertaining Comedies, than all the rest of *Europe* together. During the whole Reigns of King *Charles*, King *James*, and King *William*, there hardly pass'd a Year without one or two, and sometimes three. During the Reign of King *William* alone, we
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The DEDICATION.

had seven or eight very agreeable ones, only from two Gentlemen, Sir John Vanbrugh and Mr. Congreve. But since that pernicious Licence was granted to four sordid Players, during the late Queen's Time, we have hardly had one that has been worth one Farthing.

Sir, As the King, upon his Accession to the Crown, came a Stranger among us, and as the Ministry had then, and have had almost ever since, Affairs of greater and more immediate Importance, than those of the Theatre, the aforesaid Grant of the late Queen was unhappily renew'd; since which the Stage has yearly declin'd, and does decline daily; and every Branch of Human Learning daily declines with it. *Etenim omnes artes, quæ ad Humanitatem pertinent, habeant quoddam commune vinculum, & quasi cognatione quadam inter se continentur.* Thus all the Branches of Human Learning are like to be lost, or very much impair'd, unless you generously undertake to support them. If the Condition in which they are,
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The DEDICATION.

were but known to the King, I am confident, he would not suffer them to be driven from among us during his Reign, as he regards either his own Interest and Glory, or the Interest and Glory of the Nation which he governs. Nor is it beneath the greatest and the wisest Minister to take care of Arts and Letters. Two of the greatest that ever were in the World, *Mæcenæ* and Cardinal *Richlieu*, are chiefly famous for the Protection they gave to them. Whenever, in any Nation, Human Learning has been diligently and impartially cultivated, at that Time that Nation has flourish'd, its King has been glorious and belov'd, and his Ministers renowned and happy. I am,

S I R,

Your most Humble,


Most Obliged, and

Most Obedient Servant,

JOHN DENNIS.



THE
PREFACE.

HEN sometime before the acting of Sir Richard's Play, I observed the scandalous Artifices that were practis'd to procure Success to it, and was acquainted with the double Cheat which was to be impos'd on the Town, upon their Pockets, and upon their Understandings, I thought I should deserve the Favour of the Publick, if I discover'd and prevented so gross an Imposition, and so palpable an Affront. But instead of meeting with the
Thanks

THE PREFACE.

Thanks which I expected, and which I thought I had merited by the Service I intended them. I found myself in the same Situation that Surly was, upon discovering the Cheat in the Alchymist; for not only Face and Subtle, who were Joynt-partners in carrying on this Poetical Cheat made vehement Outcries, and spread various Slanders, and engag'd several of their Bubbles to believe them, and disperse them, but they obliged the most Senseless of all their Bubbles to repeat the Scurrility which they dictated to them. This immediately not only recall'd Butler's Verses to my Remembrance,

*Doubtless the Pleasure is as great,
Of being cheated, as to cheat:
As Lookers-on feel most Delight,
That least perceive a Juggler's Slight,
And still the less they understand,
The more th' admire his Slight of Hand;*

but made me suspect that Butler in this hardly came up to the full Truth, because the foolish Part of the World loves more to be cheated, than the knavish Part does to cheat.

The

The P R E F A C E.

The Generality of Mankind are sure to love him, who imposes on them, and to hate him who opens their Eyes; For he who cheats them, does it by entertaining some pleasing Passion: But he who undeceives them, holds the Glass to them, and shews them Truth and themselves, a mortifying Sight. Now, whenever you put a Man out of Conceit with himself, you put him out of Humour with you likewise. All the Time the grand Cheat of the South Sea was carrying on by the first Directors, I constantly observ'd, that if any one at any Time was so hardy as to tell any one of the Subscribers that he was cheated, it made him terribly out of humour with him who told him so, and augmented his implicit Faith in the Directors who cheated him, and redoubled his Respect and Esteem for them.

*The double Cheat above-mention'd, which was contriv'd by Face and Subtle in Concert, but executed chiefly by Subtle, was perhaps the most audacious that ever was impos'd on the Capital of a great People, by Persons who pretended at the same Time to act by publick Authority: And I know not which is the
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The P R E F A C E.

more impudent Part of it ; the using such scandalous Methods, to make the most absurd and most inspid Entertainment that ever came upon the English Stage, pass for the very best, or the raising the Prices for a Hum-drum Representation, which they had nicknamed a Comedy, and the raising them on the Account of the Scenes, forsooth. Sir William Davenant was the first who brought Scenes upon the Stage, towards the Middle of the last Century ; and to defray the Expence of them, from time to time, rais'd the Theatrical Receipt above a third Part higher than it was before. The Pit, which was before but eighteen Pence, was rais'd to Half a Crown ; The Boxes, which were Half a Crown before, were advanc'd to four Shillings ; the first Gallery from a Shilling to eighteen Pence ; and the upper Gallery, from Sixpence to a Shilling. So that, as I said before, there is above a third Part of each Night's Receipt, even at the common Prices, allow'd for the Scenes. Now what shall we say of these most sordid Wretches, whose Avarice is no more to be satisfied than the barren Womb, or the Grave ? They are not content-
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THE PREFACE.

ed, it seems, with getting, even at common Prices, each of them a thousand or fifteen Hundred Pounds a Year, which enables them to live in shameful Luxury, disgraceful to Great Britain: They are not contented to loll each of them in his gilded Chariot, as often as they vouchsafe, at their own Expence, to give the Publick a Farce without Doors, and to look down upon the transitory Bubbles, who support them: They are not contented to enjoy their unmerited Gains, without paying any Thing out of them either to Poor or Publick, and that at a Time when Offices, Salaries, Pensions, when every Mortal, every Thing is tax'd: They are not content to be thus unaccountably indulg'd; but at the same Time they must impose upon the Publick, and wrong their Audiences of twelve hundred Pounds, as they certainly did, during, what, in their Theatrical Cant, they call the Run of their last Rhapsody.

*Some People take Success to be a Proof of Merit in Writers, whereas in the Degeneracy of Taste, if 'tis attended with a Cabal, 'tis a certain Proof of the want of it. All the Roman Satirists were out of Humour with
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The P R E F A C E.

the successful Scriblers of their Times, because as it appears by what they say of them, they ow'd their Success to Cabals, and to the repeating their Works to Assemblies: Witness what Horace says of Fannius in the 4th Satire of the first Book.

----- Beatus Fannius, ultro

Delatis capsis & imagine: cum mea nemo

Scripta legat, vulgo recitare timentis ----

And what Juvenal says in the beginning of his first Satire,

Semper ego Auditor tantum? nunquamne
reponam,

Vexatus toties Rauci Theseide Codri?

Ergo impune mihi recitaverit ille togatas
Hic elegos?

*But besides undeserved Success, the Roman Satirists had another Provocation to Satire, and that was Hypocrisy, when Persons who were void of all Morality pretended to a more rigid Virtue than all the rest of
the*

The P R E F A C E.

*the World; and it was this chiefly that mov'd
the Spleen of Lucilius, as Horace tells us in
the first Satire of his second Book.*

----- est Lucilius ausus

Primus in hunc operis componere carmina
morem,

Detrahere & pellem, nitidus quâ quisque
per ora,

Cederet, introrsum turpis.

*But if such vile Wretches ever arrived to
such a Height of Impudence as to pretend to
teach Virtue to the rest of the World, the
Provocation then became insupportable, and
the Satirist began with Fury.*

Ultra Sauromatas fugere hinc libet, & gla-
cialem

Oceanum, quoties aliquid de moribus au-
dent,

Qui Curios simulant, & Bacchanalia vi-
vunt. *Juv. Sat. 2.*

As

THE PREFACE.

As I make no doubt but that upon the publishing this little Treatise there will be the same Outcries against Criticks and Criticism, which have been formerly so often raised, I shall lay before the Reader what the late Earl of Shaftsbury writ in Defence of them, with a great deal of good Sense, and Address, and Penetration. The Passage is in the 230th Page of the first Volume of the Characteristicks.

“ Nor should I suspect the Genius of our
“ Writers, or charge them with Meanness
“ and Insufficiency on the account of this
“ Low-spiritedness which they discover,
“ were it not for another sort of Fear, by
“ which they more plainly betray themselves,
“ and seem conscious of their own Defects.
“ The Criticks, it seems, are formidable to
“ ’em: The Criticks are the dreadful Spectres,
“ the Giants, the Enchanters, who traverse
“ and disturb them in their Works: These
“ are the Persecutors, for whose Sakes they
“ are ready to hide their Heads, begging
“ Rescue and Protection from all good Peo-
“ ple, and flying in particular to the Great,
“ by whose Favour they hope to be defended
“ from

The P R E F A C E.

“ from this merciless, examining Race; for
“ what can be more cruel than to be forc’d
“ to submit to the rigorous Laws of Wit,
“ and write under such severe Judges as are
“ deaf to all Courtship, and can be wrought
“ upon by no Insinuation or Flattery to pass
“ by Faults, and pardon any Transgression
“ of Art?

“ To judge, indeed, of the Circumstances
“ of a modern Author by the Pattern of his
“ Prefaces, Dedications, and Introductions,
“ one would think, that at the Moment,
“ when a Piece of his was in hand, some
“ Conjuraton was forming against him,
“ some diabolical Powers drawing together
“ to blast his Work, and cross his generous
“ Design; he therefore rouzes his Indigna-
“ tion, hardens his Forehead, and with ma-
“ ny furious Defiances and *Avaunt-Satans!*
“ enters on his Business, not with the least
“ regard to what may justly be objected to
“ him in a way of Criticism, but with an
“ absolute Contempt of the Manner and Art
“ itself.

“ *Odi profanum vulgus & arceo*, was in
“ its time, no doubt, a generous Defiance;

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THE PREFACE.

“ the *Avaunt* was natural and proper in its
“ place, especially where Religion and Vir-
“ tue were the Poets Theme; but with our
“ Moderns the Case is generally the very
“ reverse, and accordingly the Defiance or
“ *Avaunt* should run much after this man-
“ ner. As for you vulgar Souls, mere Na-
“ turals, who know no Art, were never ad-
“ mitted into the Temple of Wisdom, nor
“ ever visited the Sanctuaries of Wit or
“ Learning, gather yourselves together from
“ all Parts, and hearken to the Song or Tale
“ I am about to utter; but for you Men of
“ Science and Understanding, who have
“ Ears and Judgment, and can weigh Sense,
“ scan Syllables, and measure Sounds; you
“ who by a certain Art distinguish false
“ Thought from true, Correctness from
“ Rudeness, and Bombast and Chaos from
“ Order and the Sublime, away hence! or
“ stand aloof! whilst I practise upon the
“ Easiness of those mean Capacities and Ap-
“ prehensions who make the most numerous
“ Audience, and are the only competent
“ Judges of my Labours.

“ Accuracy

The P R E F A C E.

“ Accuracy of Workmanship requires a
“ Critick’s Eye; ’tis lost upon a vulgar
“ Judgment. Nothing grieves a real Artist,
“ more than that Indifference of the Publick,
“ which suffers Work to pass uncriticiz’d.
“ Nothing on the other Side, rejoices him,
“ than the nice View and Inspection
“ of the accurate Examiner, and Judge of
“ Work: ’Tis the mean Genius, the slovenly
“ Performer, who knowing nothing of true
“ Workmanship, endeavours by the best
“ outward Gloriz, and dazzling Shew, to turn
“ the Eye from a direct and steady Survey
“ of his Piece.

“ What is there which an expert Musician
“ more desires than to perform his Part in
“ in the Presence of those who are knowing
“ in his Art? ’Tis to the Ear alone he applies
“ himself; the critical, the nice Ear. Let his
“ Hearers be of what Character they please:
“ Be they naturally austere, morose, or rigid;
“ no matter so they are Criticks, able to
“ censure, remark, and sound every Accord
“ and Symphony. What is there mortifies
“ the good Painter, more than when amidst
“ his admiring Spectators, there is not one
“ present who has been us’d to compare the

The P R E F A C E.

“ Hands of different Masters, or has an Eye
“ to distinguish the Advantages or Defects
“ of every Stile? Thro’ all the inferior Orders
“ of Mechanicks, the Rule is found to hold
“ the same: In every Science, every Art, the
“ real Masters, or Proficients, rejoice in no-
“ thing more, than in the thorough Search
“ and Examination of their Performances
“ by all the Rules of Art, and nicest Cri-
“ ticism. Why therefore (in the Muses
“ Name) is it not the same with our Pre-
“ tenders to the Writing Art; our Poets
“ and Prose Authors of every kind? Why,
“ in this Profession are we found such Cri-
“ tick-Haters, and indulg’d in this unlearn’d
“ Aversion, unless it be taken for granted
“ that as Wit and Learning stand at present,
“ in our Nation, we are still upon the Foot
“ of Empiricks and Mountebanks.

“ From these Considerations, I take upon
“ me absolutely to condemn the fashionable
“ Custom of inveighing against *Criticks*, as
“ the common Enemies, the Pests, and Incen-
“ diaries of the Commonwealth of Wit and
“ Letters. I assert, on the contrary, that they
“ are the Props and Pillars of this Building;
and

THE PREFACE.

“ and that without the Encouragement and
“ Propagation of this Race, we should re-
“ main as *Gothick Architects* as ever.

Thus far the late most ingenious and most judicious Earl of Shaftsbury has gone in the Defence of Criticks and Criticism. I shall desire to say a little in my own particular Defence: I have been long since represented, by Persons who have never read what I have writ, as one who likes nothing, and one who makes it his Business to find out Faults, and never discovers Beauties: Upon my publishing lately the Defence of Sir Fopling Flutter, this Accusation was renew'd, tho' it was a Contradiction in Terms. It being impossible that any one can write a Defence of a Dramatick Poem, which he does not like; or commend a Comedy, in which he finds no Beauties. The Truth of this Affair is, that no English Author of any Note has commended so many English Poets, as I have: I shall give a List of some of them; Shakespear, Ben Johnson, Milton, Butler, Roscomon, Denham, Waller, Dryden, Wycherly, Otway, Etherege, Shadwell, Crown, Congreve, Phillips. These are some of those whom I have occasionally commended

THE PREFACE.

commended, and in some of them too have found out Beauties, which every one could not discover.

If any one believes, that in some Places of the following Sheets I have been too harsh, and too severe, I desire such a one to consider, that I have been basely wrong'd, and barbarously us'd, by the Persons upon whom I may be thought to be too severe: And as the Wrongs which have been done me, do not come within the Cognizance of the National Law, nor under the usual Forms of the National Equity, I am as to this Matter, in a State of Nature with those Persons, and am authoriz'd by the Law of Nature to do myself Justice, as far as it may be done, without offending the Laws of my Country, or impartial Equity.





REMARKS

ON THE

PREFACE

TO THE

Conscious Lovers.



THE Author tells us in the Beginning of his Preface, That *this Comedy has been receiv'd with univ'ersal Acceptance*. Whether he is in the Right, or not, I appeal to the World. The Reason which he gives for this universal Acceptance is very extraordinary: *It has been receiv'd, says he, with univ'ersal Acceptance, for it was in every Part excellently perform'd.* Is it not a pleasant

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fant Humility in a Dramatick Writer, to affirm, that he is indebted for his whole Success to the Actors? I was apt to believe, at the first Sight, that this was an affected Modesty, and a counterfeit Humility. But when I went a little further, I began to think I was mistaken, and that the Author was in earnest; for he seems to be apprehensive, that the Applause of the Reader would hardly be so general as was that of the Spectator; and he does his Endeavour to induce the Reader not to pass a Judgment of the Play, till he has seen it acted: *It must be remembred, says he, that a Play is to be seen, and is made to be represented with the Advantage of Actors, nor can appear but with half the Spirit without it.* Now there have been several Plays writ in several Languages, which were never design'd to be seen. There are two of our own: The Tragedy of *Sampson*, by *Milton*; and the *State of Innocence*, by *Dryden*. 'Tis true, indeed, most Plays are design'd by their Authors to be seen, but that is not the chief Design of a Dramatick Writer, who has a good Genius. For such an Author writes to all Countries, and to all Ages, and writes with the lively Hope, that his great Master-pieces shall outlive the very Language in which they are compos'd. When Sir *Richard* says, That a Play can appear but with half the Spirit, unless we see it acted, I would fain ask, on whom he designs to impose this? If he who
reads

reads a Play is qualified to read and to judge, he reads it with a truer and juster Spirit than can be supplied by any Company of Actors. If such a Reader happens at any Time to be better pleased with the Representation of a Play than the reading it, 'tis an infallible Sign, that such a Play is a very wretched Performance.

But let us see how Sir *Richard* goes on. *The greatest Effect*, says he, *of a Play in reading it, is to excite the Reader to go see it; and when he does so, it is then a Play has the Effect of Precept and Example.* Good God! is it possible that this could come from any one but a Man who is resolv'd to shew that he takes all his Readers to be Ideots? When we read the Tragedies of *Sophocles* or *Euripides*, or the Comedies of *Aristophanes*, *Plautus*, or *Terence*, is the greatest Effect they have upon us, the exciting us to go to see them acted? When Sir *Richard* read the *Andria* of *Terence*, was the exciting him to go to see it acted the greatest Effect that it had upon him? No, the greatest Effect that it had upon him, was the Desire to see another Play acted, and that was his own deplorable Imitation of the *Andria*.

But a Play, says he, *has only, in the Representation, the Effect of Example and Precept.* So that 'tis not the Dramatick Persons, it seems, 'tis not *Timoleon*, *Scipio*, *Bontus*, who are to be the Examples of Vi-

tue to us ; no, 'tis the Players, I warrant, who represent them ; 'tis Mr. *Booth*, Mr. *Robert Wilks*, and Mr. *Colley Cibber*, whose Heroick Virtue we are to imitate, and by whose Actions we are to be instructed.

But Sir *Richard* goes on, and tells us, That the chief Design of the *Conscious Lovers* was to be an innocent Performance. Now there are a hundred innocent Performances upon the *British* Stage : But perhaps he meant a Performance that should have nothing but its Innocence to recommend it, and should, by consequence, be thought the only Play of its Kind. But in that he is mistaken, for there is one more, and that is, the Performance of *Bays* in the *Rehearsal*, which is, indeed, incoherent, incongruous, impertinent, insipid, and ridiculous ; but certainly a very innocent Performance. I am afraid it will appear by the following Sheets, that the *Conscious Lovers* has no small Share of some of these Qualities, and has nothing valuable but barely the Catastrophe. And here I cannot but observe, that Sir *Richard*, who has upon so many Occasions inveigh'd against the Rules, and particularly, in that notable Paper call'd the *Theatre*, owes the only entertaining Scene of his Play to the Observation of a Rule of *Aristotle*, which is, That the Discovery should be immediately follow'd by the Change of Fortune, that is, by the Catastrophe. Sir *Richard*, indeed, without ever dreaming

dreaming of *Aristotle*, had it from *Terence*, who took it from *Menander*, who had it from the Precept of that great Philosopher, and from the Practice of *Sophocles* and *Euripides*. For the tragick and comick Poets frequently borrow'd their Hints from one another; but, at the same time, took Care to do it with Judgment, and not to intrench upon each other's Province. And therefore we see, that the Discovery in *Terence*, and the Reconciliation of *Simo* to *Pamphilus*, is comprehended in a narrow Compass, and has nothing in it of those violent Transports of Grief which are inconsistent with Comedy.

Verfibus exponi Tragicis res comica non vult,

says *Horace* in his *Art of Poetry*, which *Boileau* has imitated in the two following Lines of his

*Le Comique ennemi des foupirs & des pleurs
N'admet point en foi des Tragiques Douleurs.*

But I beg the Reader's Pardon for this Digression, and now return to the Preface.

As to the Quarrel in the fourth Act, I shall speak to it in its Place. In the mean time I am of the Number of those, who believe that this Incident, and the Case of the Father and Daughter, are not the proper Subjects

jects of Comedy. When Sir *Richard* says, that any thing that has its Foundation in Happiness and Success must be the Subject of Comedy, he confounds Comedy with that Species of Tragedy which has a happy Catastrophe. When he says, that 'tis an Improvement of Comedy to introduce a Joy too exquisite for Laughter, he takes all the Care that he can to shew, that he knows nothing of the Nature of Comedy. Does he really believe that *Moliere* understood the Nature of it: I say *Moliere*, who, in the Opinion of all *Europe*, excepting that small Portion of it which is acquainted with *Ben Johnson*, had born away the Prize of Comedy from all Nations, and from all Ages, if for the sake of his Profit, he had not descended sometimes too much to Buffoonry. Let Sir *Richard*, or any one, look into that little Piece of *Moliere*, call'd, *La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes*, and he shall find there, that in *Moliere's* Opinion, 'tis the Business of a Comick Poet to enter into the Ridicule of Men, and to expose the blind Sides of all Sorts of People agreeably; that he does nothing at all, if he does not draw the Pictures of his Contemporaries, and does not raise the Mirth of the sensible Part of an Audience, which, says he, 'tis no easy Matter to do. This is the Sense of *Moliere*, tho' the Words are not his exactly.

When

When Sir *Richard* talks of a Joy too exquisite for Laughter, he seems not to know that Joy, generally taken, is common like Anger, Indignation, Love, to all Sorts of Poetry, to the Epick, the Dramatick, the Lyrick; but that that kind of Joy which is attended with Laughter, is the Characteristick of Comedy; as Terror or Compallion, according as one or the other is predominant, makes the Characteristick of Tragedy, as Admiration does of Epick Poetry.

When Sir *Richard* says, That weeping upon the Sight of a deplorable Object is not a Subject for Laughter, but that 'tis agreeable to good Sense and to Humanity, he says nothing but what all the sensible Part of the World has already granted; but then all that sensible Part of the World have always deny'd, that a deplorable Object is fit to be shewn in Comedy. When Sir *George Etherege*, in his Comedy of *Sir Fopling Flutter*, shews *Loveit* in all the Height and Violence of Grief and Rage, the Judicious Poet takes care to give those Passions a ridiculous Turn by the Mouth of *Dorimant*. Besides that, the Subject is at the Bottom ridiculous: For *Loveit* is a Mistress, who has abandon'd herself to *Dorimant*; and by falling into these violent Passions, only because she fancies that something of which she is very desirous has gone beside her, makes herself truly ridiculous. Thus is this famous Scene in the second

cond Act of *Sir Foppling*, by the Character of *Loveit*, and the dextrous handling the Subject, kept within the Bounds of Comedy: But the Scene of the Discovery in the *Conscious Lovers* is truly Tragical. *Indiana* was strictly virtuous: She had indeed conceiv'd a violent Passion for *Bevil*; but all young People in full Health are liable to such a Passion, and perhaps the most sensible and the most virtuous are more than others liable: But besides, that she had kept this Passion within the Bounds of Honour, it was the natural Effect of her Esteem for her Benefactor, and of her Gratitude, that is, of her Virtue. These Considerations render'd her Case deplorable, and the Catastrophe downright tragical, which of a Comedy ought to be the most comical Part, for the same Reason that it ought to be the most tragical Part of a Tragedy.

Before I take my Leave of Sir *Richard's* Preface, I cannot help saying a Word to his Song, which he has brought in here by Violence, to the great Surprise of the Reader, for no other End, than to shew that he is as notable at Metre as he is at Prose. He seems as much concern'd for the Omission of it in the Representation of his, as *Bays* in the third Act of the *Rehearsal* is for the Neglect of his; nay, and to have as high an Opinion of it, as that merry Bard discovers that he has of his, when he says to

Johnjon,

Johnson, What! are they gone without singing my last new Song? 's Bud, would it were in their Bellies. I'll tell you, Mr. Johnson, if I have any Skill in these Matters, I vow to Gad this Song is peremptorily the very best that ever yet was written: You must know it was made by Tom Thimble's first Wife, after she was dead.

So that this Song of Mr. *Bays* too, as well as his Brother Sir *Richard's*, is a Love-Song, design'd just as judiciously, express'd just as passionately, but more harmoniously, more freely, and better contriv'd for Melody. And yet from the Omission of this Song of his, does Sir *Richard* take an occasion to affront the finest Artist of his kind in the World, and to treat Signor *Carbonelli* like a Country Fidler, who sings *John Dory* at Wakes and Fairs to Hobnail'd Peasants and Milk-Maids.

I thought here to take my Leave; but the Sight of *Terence* and *Cibber* together provokes me to go a little farther.

*Jungentur jam gryphes equis: ævoque sequenti
Cum canibus timidi venient ad pocula damæ.*
Virg.

Sir *Richard* says, that he is extremely surpriz'd to find what *Cibber* told him prove a Truth, that what he valued himself so much upon, the Translation of *Terence* should be

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imputed

imputed to him as a Reproach. Sir *Richard* knew very well, that *Cibber* had said so many false Things with relation to this Play, that he might be very well surpriz'd to find Truth come from him, especially upon that Subject. But Sir *Richard* is mistaken; *Cibber* is constant to himself, and does not deviate from Falshood upon this Occasion. No Mortal reproaches Sir *Richard* with his Translation of *Terence*. He has shewn clearly, that he is not capable of translating any one Scene of him. But tho' he had been never so capable, he ought to have known that a Translation of *Terence*, by the best Hand in the World, would not succeed upon the *English* Stage. He ought to have known the Defect, that the *Romans* themselves, who liv'd some time after him, and especially *Cæsar*, found in that Comick Poet. The great Objection to him was, that he wanted the comick Force, that is to say, that he had not in his Comedies that Humour and Pleasantry which are so agreeable to the Nature of Comedy. For the Force of any kind of Writing consists chiefly in that which distinguishes it from all other Kinds. Now the Ridicule being that which distinguishes Comedy from every other kind of Poetry, the *Comick Force* must consist in that. But how came it to pass then, that five of the six Comedies of *Terence* succeeded upon the *Roman* Stage? The Answer is plain, because

cause the Generality of the *Romans*, at the Time they were writ, knew no better. The *Roman Comedy* in general had but little of that agreeable Pleasantry that is fit to divert Men of Sense, which occasion'd the following Censure of *Quintilian*: *In Comedia maxime claudicamus: licet Varro dicat Mufas, Ælii Stolonis sententia, Plautino sermone locuturas fuisse, si latine loqui vellent: licet Cæcilium veteres laudibus ferant: licet Terentii scripta ad Scipionem Africanum referantur: quæ tamen sunt in hoc genere elegantissima, & plus adhuc habitura gratiæ si intra Versus trimetros stetissent. Vix levem consequimur umbram, adeo ut mihi sermo ipse Romanus non recipere videatur illam solis concessam Atticis venerem, quando eamne Græci quidem in alio genere linguæ obtinuerint.* And therefore, when *Shadwell* undertook to write a Comedy upon the Plan of the *Adelphi*, he, who very well knew the Nature of his Art, and by consequence knew what was defective in the *Roman Comedy*, took particular Care to supply from his own Invention the Ridicule that was wanting in that; and it was by using that Method that he made the *Squire of Alsatia* a very good and very entertaining Comedy. *Moliere*, who writ upon the same Plan, has done the very same Thing in his *L'Ecole des Maris*. He has done the very same in his *Faurberies de Scapin*, which is writ upon

the Plan of the *Phormio*; but in the latter, he has gone too far, and shamefully, to use the Expression of *Boileau*, coupled *Terence* with *Jack-Pudding*; a Conjunction as scandalous as Sir *Richard* had made of *Terence* and his Friend *Cibber*: I heartily congratulate both of them upon this their mutual Friendship. They are *par nobile fratrum*, a Pair so pious, so good, so human, so virtuous, so religious, that they are perfectly secur'd, even in the midst of a treacherous World, of each other's mutual Fidelity; because there is not in the World that Third Person who is fit to be a Friend to either. The Knight was too humble, when he attributed the great Success of his Play to the Players in general; the Success is only due to himself, and to his virtuous Friend; that is, to that Cabal which was so industriously conven'd by them, and to those Artifices which were with so much Skill conducted by them. They have done greater Services than this for each other, and have secured the Stage to themselves alone, which they regard as their proper *Domain*, and therefore every Stranger who for the future comes upon their Ground, is to be esteem'd a Trespasser. In the mean Time, they have resolved between themselves, to make the Town swallow any Entertainment which they shall think fit to provide for them; and they seem agreed to vouch for each other. *Cibber* is to make Affidavit, that the Knight's
Gudgeons

Gudgeons are Cod-Fish and Sea-Carp, that arriv'd by the last Fish-Pool; and the Knight is to give it upon his immaculate Honour, that *Cibber's* Strickle-Bats and Millers-Thumbs are either Mullets or Turbuts. And they seem to have made a formal Order, That the Town shall believe them, under the Penalty of being treated with the same Anathema's that *Martin* and *John* were treated by *Peter* in the *Tale of a Tub*; that is, if you will not give Credit to what we tell you, rather than believe your Senses, G---d eternally damn you. *Cibber* indeed has receiv'd some transitory Rebukes upon taking this Resolution; but he still keeps firm to his Point, and is resolv'd to carry it.



REMARKS



REMARKS

ON THE

Conscious Lovers.



HAVE determin'd to make some Remarks, with Brevity and Impartiality, upon a late Dramatick Performance, call'd, *The Conscious Lovers*, a Comedy: That I may be then certainly able to determine whether the great Success of it is owing to uncommon Merit, or to those extraordinary infamous Methods which I have lately taken Notice of in a former Treatise, and which, if there is not a sudden Stop put to them, will occasion the utter Downfal of the Stage, and of all the Arts dependent on it.

'Tis an Observation of *Aristotle*, in the sixteenth Chapter of his *Poeticks*, that there should be no Incident in the Action of a Tragedy, which should be without its Reason, because the Absurdity of the Incidents would

would destroy the Probability of the Action, and turn poetical Fiction into downright Falshood. Now, if upon this Account 'tis requir'd that all the Incidents should be reasonable in Tragedy, 'tis still more requisite in Comedy, where the Probable is more necessary, and the Wonderful less tolerable. But now this whole Dramatick Performance seems to me to be built upon several Things which have no Foundation, either in Probability, or in Reason, or Nature. The Father of *Indiana*, whose Name is *Danvers*, and who was formerly an eminent Merchant at *Bristol*, upon his Arrival from the *Indies*, from whence he returns with a great Estate, carries on a very great Trade at *London* unknown to his Friends and Relations at *Bristol*, under the Name of *Sealand*. Now this Fiction, without which there could be no Comedy, nor any thing call'd a Comedy, is not supported by Probability, or by Reason, or Nature. 'Tis true, he tells his Daughter, in the fifth Act, towards the Top of the 82d Page, That when his Misfortunes drove him to the *Indies*, for Reasons too tedious to be mention'd at the Time he spoke, he chang'd his Name of *Danvers* into *Sealand*. When his Misfortunes drove him out of his Country, those Misfortunes were Reasons sufficient to account for the changing his Name. But is it probable, that at his Arrival in the *Indies*, or at his Return to *England*

land with a vast Estate, he should still retain the Name of *Sealand*? Is it natural to believe, that under that borrow'd Name he should conceal himself from his Family and all his Relations, as it appears by what his Daughter says, *Act II. Page 30.* that he does? Is it credible, that he could be such a Monster, as never to send to *Bristol* after his Arrival from the *Indies*, to enquire after his Wife, his Sister, and his Daughter? and that he should feloniously marry a second Wife, without ever knowing what was become of the first? Is it reasonable to believe, that if he could be absurd enough to design this, he could ever possibly effect it? Is it possible that a Man can return from the *Indies* with a vast Estate, and the World should not know either what he is, or what he was when he went thither, especially when he traded to every Part of the Globe? Is there so much as one Man in *England* with a vast Estate, whose Original is not known? Or was there ever any one great Merchant of *London*, whose Family and Original was not known to the Merchants at *Bristol*, when betwixt the one and the other there is always so strict and constant a Communication?

But secondly, the filial Obedience of young *Bevil* is carried a great deal too far. He is said to be one of a great Estate, and a great Understanding; and yet he makes a Promise to his Father, not to marry without his Consent,

sent, which is a Promise that can do his Father only a vain imaginary Good, and may do him real Hurt. A young Man of a great Understanding, cannot but know, that if he makes such a Promise, he may be oblig'd to break it, or perish, or, at least, be unhappy all the rest of his Life. Such a one cannot but know, that he may possibly be seiz'd with a Passion so resistless, and so violent, that he must possess, or perish; and consequently, if the Woman who inspires this Passion, be a Woman of strict Virtue, he must marry, or perish, or, at least, be mortally uneasy for the rest of his Life. Children, indeed, before they come to Years of Discretion are oblig'd to pay a blind Obedience to their Parents. But after they are come to the full Use of their Reason, they are only bound to obey them in what is reasonable. Indeed, if a Son is in Expectation of an Estate from his Father, he is engag'd to a good deal of Compliance, even after he comes to Years of Discretion. But that was not *Bevil's* Case: He enjoy'd a very good one of his Mother's, by vertue of a Marriage Article; and therefore it was unreasonable in him to make such a Promise to his Father, as it was unreasonable in his Father to urge him to it, especially upon so sordid a Motive as the doubling a great Estate. This is acting in a manner something arbitrary. And it ill becomes an Author, who would be thought

a Patron of Liberty, to suppose that Fathers are absolute, when Kings themselves are limited. If he had not an Understanding of his own to tell him this, he might have learn'd from Mr. Locke, in his sixth Chapter of his admirable *Essay on Government*: *That every Man has a Right to his natural Freedom, without being subjected to the Will or Authority of any other Man. Children, I confess, says that great Man, are not born in this full State of Equality, though they are born to it. Their Parents have a sort of Rule and Jurisdiction over them when they come into the World, and for some Time after; but 'tis, says he, but a temporary one. The Bonds of this Subjection are like the Swadling Clothes which they are wrapp'd up in, and supported by in the Weakness of their Infancy: Age and Reason, as they grow up, loosen them, till at length they drop quite off, and leave a Man at his own free Disposal.*

The same Author a little after adds, *That God having given Man an Understanding to direct his Actions, has allowed him a Freedom of Will, and Liberty of acting, as properly belonging thereunto, within the Bounds of that Law he is under. But while he is in an Estate wherein he has no Understanding of his own to direct his Will, he is not to have any Will of his own to follow; he that understands for him, must will for him too; he must prescribe to his Will, and regulate*

gulate his Actions: But when he comes to the Estate that made his Father a Freeman, the Son is a Freeman too.

This holds, says that great Man, in all the Laws a Man is under, whether Natural or Civil. Is a Man under the Law of Nature? What made him free of that Law? What gave him a free disposing of his Property according to his own Will, within the Compass of that Law? I answer, a State of Maturity, wherein he might be suppos'd capable to know that Law, that so he might keep his Actions within the Bounds of it. When he has acquir'd that State, he is presum'd to know how far that Law is to be his Guide, and how far he may make use of his Freedom; and so comes to have it: Till then some body else must guide him, who is presum'd to know how far the Law allows a Liberty. If such a State of Reason, such an Age of Discretion made him free, the same shall make his Son free too. Is a Man under the Law of England? What made him free of that Law; that is, to have the Liberty to dispose of his Actions and Possessions according to his own Will, within the Permission of that Law? A Capacity of knowing that Law, which is suppos'd by that Law at the Age of Twenty one, and in some Cases sooner. If this made the Father free, it shall make the Son free too. Till then we see the Law allows the Son

to have no Will, but he is to be guided by the Will of his Father, or Guardian, who is to understand for him. And if the Father die, and fail to substitute a Deputy in this Trust, if he has not provided a Deputy to govern his Son during his Minority, during his want of Understanding, the Law takes care to do it; some other must govern him, and be a Will to him till he has attain'd to a State of Freedom, and his Understanding be fit to take the Government of his Will. But after that the Father and Son are equally free, as much as a Tutor and Pupil after Nonage, equally Subjects of the same Law together, without any Dominion left in the Father over the Life, Liberty, or Estate of the Son, whether they be only in the State, and under the Law of Nature, or under the positive Laws of an establish'd Government.

I am sensible that this Quotation has been a great deal too long; and yet to set the Unreasonableness of Bevil's Promise in a full Light, I am oblig'd to add what the same Author says a little lower in the very same Chapter, viz. *The Power of the Father extends not to the Laws, or Goods, which either his Children's Industry, or another's Bounty has made theirs, nor to their Liberty neither, when they are once arriv'd to the Enfranchisement of the Years of Discretion. The Father's Empire then ceases; and he can from thence-forwards no more*
dispose

dispose of the Liberty of his Son, than of any other Man. And it must be far from an absolute or perpetual Jurisdiction, from which a Man may withdraw himself; having License from divine Authority, to leave Father and Mother, and cleave to his Wife.

From what I have quoted from so judicious and so penetrating an Author, I think it is pretty plain, that young *Bevil*, who dispos'd of part of his Estate without, nay, and as he might reasonably suppose, against the Consent of his Father, might *a fortiori* have dispos'd of his Person too, if it had not been for his unreasonable Promise; and that 'tis highly improbable, that one of the Estate and Understanding, which he is said to have, should absurdly make a Promise which might possibly endanger the Happiness of his whole Life. 'Tis said, indeed, in more than one Place of the Play, that the Son has uncommon Obligations to his Father; but we are neither told, nor are we able to guess what those Obligations are. What uncommon Obligations can a Son, who has a great Estate in Possession, have to a Father of so sordid a Nature as Sir *John Bevil* shews himself? *Act 4. Page 65.* Besides, what Obligations can be binding enough to make a Man of a great Estate part with Liberty, with the very Liberty of his Choice, in the most important Action of his Life, upon which the Happiness of all the rest depends.

But

But as unreasonable as this Promise is, which young *Bevil* made to his Father, by which he gave away his Birthright, his Liberty, yes, the very Liberty of his Choice, in an Affair upon which his Happiness most depended, his Behaviour to *Indiana* is still more unaccountable: He loves her, and is beloved by her; makes constant Visits and profuse Presents to her; and yet conceals his Passion from her; which may be perhaps a clumsy Expedient for the Author's preparing the Discovery, but is neither agreeable to Nature nor Reason: For 'tis impossible that any young Man in Nature in Health and Vigour, and in the Height of a violent Passion, can so far command himself by the meer Force of Reason. I am willing, indeed, to allow that he may be able to do it by the Assistance of the true Religion: But the Business of a Comick Poet is only to teach Morality: Grace is not taught, but inspir'd. The dreadful Mysteries of Christianity are but ill compatible with the Lightness and Mirth of Comedy; or with the Obscenity and Prophaness of a degenerate Stage, or with the Dispositions of an Assembly, compos'd of Persons who have some of them no Religion, and some of them not the true one. Besides that, nothing but a Doctrine taken from the moral Law can be a just Foundation of a Fable; which every true Comedy is.

Nor

Nor is such a Behaviour any more agreeable to Reason, than it is to Nature: *Bevil* loves *Indiana*, and is beloved by her: She adores him, she dies for him, and he knows it: He observes it; and observes at the same Time that so violent a Passion is attended with equal Anxiety; and that Anxiety is entirely caus'd by the perplexing Doubt she is in, whether she is beloved, or not, as appears by what he says himself, *Act 2. p. 27.* Why then doth he not declare himself, and by that Declaration compose her Mind, and qualify her to expect with Patience the Benefit of Time. 'Tis indeed true, that he had promis'd his Father never to marry without his Consent, while his Father liv'd; but he had not promis'd him never to love without his Consent; for that would have been a ridiculous Promise; a Promise, the Performance or Non-performance of which was not in his own Power, and would depend entirely on what the People call *Chance*, and what Philosophers call *Providence*. What could he mean then by not declaring himself? As the Love he had conceiv'd for *Indiana* was no Breach of the Promise he had made to his Father, so neither could he violate it by any Declaration of that Passion! What then, once more, can he mean by his Silence? His only reasonable way of proceeding had been to acquaint not only his Mistress, but his Father, and all the World, with the Passion which

which he felt for her, and with the Necessity he was in to marry her, or to be for ever miserable. Such a Declaration was not at all inconsistent with his Duty; and if his Father had either Reason or Compassion, would have caus'd him to relent, and to release his Son from a Promise, the persevering in which must prove unhappy, or fatal to him. If it should be said that such a Concealment of his Passion was necessary, that he might make a Retreat with Honour, in Case his Father should still be obstinate; to this I answer, That there was no Retreat for him, unless he would at the same time retreat from Virtue and Honour; that his Behaviour had fix'd and determin'd him; that by his Generosity and constant Visits, he had rais'd the Passion of *Indiana* to such a Height, that his leaving her would in all likelihood be followed by Madness, or by Self-murder, or by dreadful Hysterical Symptoms, as deplorable as either; of which, what passes between her Father and her in the fifth Act, is a sufficient Proof. Beside, that such a Retreat would prove as fatal to her Honour as to her Person: He had for some time made constant Visits; he had made very extravagant Presents to her; he had made no Declaration of the Affection he had for her, either to her or to her Aunt *Isabella*, or acquainted any one with his Design to marry her, if he could obtain his Father's Consent.

Consent. Now can anything be more plain, than that such a Behaviour, if he left her, would ruin the Reputation of the poor Lady, and cause all the World to entertain such Thoughts of her as *Sealand* and *Myrtle* had already express'd. And thus I have endeavour'd to shew that the Behaviour of *Bevil* to *Indiana*, in his concealing his Passion from her, is as ridiculously whimsical, as that of *Cimberton* to her Sister *Lucinda*.

The Catastrophe, I must confess, is very moving, but it would be more so, if it were rightly and reasonably handled, because it would be much more surprizing. For the Surprise is, in a good Measure, prevented by the Behaviour of *Isabella* upon the first Appearance of *Sealand*; which, if it had not been out of all Probability and Nature, would have prevented it more. It was highly in Nature and Probability, that *Isabella*, upon the first discovering her Brother, should fly into an excessive Transport of Joy, and have run to embrace him; for when she is made to say, That her Brother must not know her yet, she is made to give no Reasons for it, nor can the Audience imagine any. 'Tis not *Isabella* who says that, but the Author, who clumsily uses it to serve a Turn; for if she had discover'd herself to her Brother at his first Appearance, it had prevented the Audience's Sorrow and Compassion for the imaginary Distress of *Indiana*,
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and, consequently, their return to Joy. But as *Aristotle*, and all the great Criticks after him, have taught us, that there is to be no Incident in a Dramatick Poem, but what must be founded on Reason, it happens, as we observ'd above, very unluckily here, that there is no Incident in the *Conscious Lovers* but what is attended by some great Absurdity. For the Action of *Indiana*, in throwing away her Bracelet, is of the same Stamp, and is entirely the Author's, and not the Dramatick Person's; for it was neither necessary nor profitable, that *Indiana*, in the Height of her Agony, should so much as think of her Bracelet, or if she did think of it, should resolve to throw away the greatest Token that she had to remember her dead Mother, for whose Memory her Grief and Distress ought naturally to renew and redouble her Tenderness. But the Author is obliged to have Recourse to this as an awkward Expedient, tho' the best he could find, to bring on the Discovery. But had he known any thing of the Art of the Stage, he would have known, that those Discoveries are but dully made, which are made by Tokens; that they ought necessarily or probably to spring from the whole Train of the Incidents contrary to our Expectation. And how easy was it to bring that about here? For such a Discovery had been very well prepared, by what young *Bevil* says to *Humphrey* in the first

first Act, and by the Hint *Indiana* gives to *Sealand* in the fifth Act, which Hint the old Gentleman readily takes; for when she tells him she had been made an Infant Captive on the Seas, he immediately crys out, *An Infant Captive!* and, after some Interruption given by *Indiana*, he says, *Dear Lady! O yet one Moment's Patience, my Heart grows full with your Affliction, but yet there is something in your Story that ----* She answers as if she were at cross Purposes, *My Portion here is Bitterness and Sorrow.* To which he replies, *Do not think so. Pray answer me, Does Bevil know your Name and Family?* So that a few Questions more, pertinently answer'd, would have brought on the Discovery. Now if the Discovery had been made this Way, and *Isabella* had not known her Brother at her first seeing him, but had come in to *Sealand* and *Indiana* just after the Discovery had been made, there would have been two Surprizes, both greater and more agreeable than now they are, and both of them without Absurdity.

But now the Mention of the Infant Captive brings to my Remembrance the Circumstances of that Captivity, which are, to use Mr. *Cimberton's* Expression, pregnant with Absurdity. *Indiana*, it seems, with her Mother and her Aunt, are taken, in their Passage to the *Indies*, by a Privateer from *Toulon*, and carried into that Place. Now

where were they taken? It must be either in the Channel, or on the Ocean. Now, in the first place, I never heard that *Toulon* set out any Privateers. Secondly, Suppose they did, 'tis improbable that a Privateer from *Toulon* should cruize in the Ocean, and much more improbable that they should rove as far as the Channel. Thirdly, 'Tis highly improbable, that an *East-India* Vessel, which had Force enough to venture without a Convoy, should be taken by a Privateer. Fourthly, 'Tis not a Jot more probable, that supposing a Privateer from *Toulon* should have taken such a Vessel, it should chuse to carry it into *Toulon*, rather than into *Brest*, or *St. Malo*. For how long must a Privateer be carrying an *East-India* Vessel from the Channel to *Toulon*, which is above a thousand Miles from the Channel, and little less distant from that Part of the Ocean o'er which our *East-India* Ships pass. Now in so long a Voyage, the Privateer might very well be taken, and the Prize be retaken; whereas the latter might be carried to *Brest*, or *St. Malo*, with a hundred Times less Danger.

Well! But let us suppose the Privateer got safely with his Prize into *Toulon*. Does Sir *Richard* believe, that *Toulon* is situate under one of the Poles, that neither Ship nor Passengers were heard of in so many Years. If *Indiana* was an Infant, *Isabella* was old enough to write; and if she was so indiffe-

rent

rent or stupid as to omit it, the Captain of the Ship and his Mate would not fail to write to their Owners, to let them know the Fate of their Ship. If there was no Passage for Letters directly thro' *France*, yet the Way of *Holland* was open, and upon the Arrival of those Letters, not only the whole *East-India* Company, but all *London* would have known what was become of the Ship, at a Time when so many News-Writers contended which could furnish the Town with most and the freshest News. So that if *Sealand*, upon his coming from the *Indies*, had made but never so little Enquiry, he would have found that his Sister and Daughter had been at *Toulon*: If he had made no Enquiry, he must have shewn himself a fine Gentleman, indeed, who would marry a second Wife before he was certain the first was dead: And it is impossible he could know that the first was dead, without knowing that his Sister and his Daughter were at *Toulon*.

I shall now compare the Relation that old *Bevil* makes to his Man *Humphrey*, in the first Scene of the *Conscious Lovers*, to that which *Simo* makes to *Sofia* in the beginning of the *Andria*: But I shall only compare them at present with relation to the Incidents; I shall take an Opportunity afterwards to consider the Sentiments and Expressions by themselves.

The

The beginning of the *Andria* is perfectly in Nature: *Simo* begins the Relation which he makes to *Sofia* with a grave and a solemn Air, suitable to the Disposition of Mind he is in, and the great Concern he is under: Old *Bevil*, who is suppos'd to be in the same Disposition of Mind, and to lie under the same Concern, begins the Relation which he makes to *Humphrey* with an Impertinence dully gay; and therefore the beginning of the *Conscious Lovers* is entirely out of Nature.

In the *Andria*, *Chremes*, a rich old *Athenian* Citizen, offers to bestow his only Daughter *Philumena* with a great Dowry on *Pamphilus*, the Son of *Simo*, who accepts that Offer for his Son. The Match breaks off upon the Discovery which *Pamphilus* makes at the Funeral of *Chrysis* of his Passion for *Glycerium*. *Simo* the Father pretends that it still goes on, that he may take an Opportunity, from his Son's Refusal, of giving him a severe Reprimand:

*Si propter amorem uxorem nolit ducere,
Ea primum ab illo animadvertenda Injuria est,
Et nunc id operam do, ut per falsas Nuptias
Vera objurgandi Causa sit, si deneget.*

In the beginning of the *Conscious Lovers* there is a very absurd Imitation of this Passage in *Terence*: Where old *Bevil* speaks thus

thus to his Man *Humphrey*, concerning his Son.

If there is so much in this Amour of his, that he denies upon my Summons to marry, I shall have Cause enough to be offended: And then by insisting upon his marrying to Day, I shall know how far he is engag'd to the Lady in Masquerade, and from thence only shall be able to take my Measures.

Now it seems plain to me, that *Simo* would have reason to be angry at his Son's Refusal, and that old *Bevil* would have none. *Pamphilus* would refuse a Wife with a great Dowry, which he wanted, having nothing but what his Father supply'd him with, who, perhaps, might not be very easy in his own Circumstances. Besides, *Glycerium* pass'd for a Courtezan, (which was not the Case of *Indiana*,) because she was believ'd to be the Sister of *Chrysis*, who was publickly known to be one. And it would provoke any Father of a good Family, and who had all along liv'd with Reputation in the World, to find, to the Ruin and Disgrace of that Family, his only Son married to a Whore, or living with her as if he were married to her, which was against both Law and Custom at *Athens*, and a great deal more scandalous there, than it is in this Blessed Town, as is evident from what *Simo* says in that admirable Scence which is between him and his Son and *Chremes*, in
the

the fifth Act of this Comedy, where Nature is drawn with such masterly Strokes, and in such lively and glowing Colours.

Adeo n'impotentieffe animo, ut præter Civium Morem, atque legem, & sui voluntatem patris, Tamen hanc habere studeat cum summo probro.

But 'tis downright ridiculous in old *Bevil* to pretend to be offended, in Case his Son who is in Possession of a great Estate, and entirely independant on his Father, and one whom the Father himself calls a sober and discreet Gentleman, should refuse to marry at a Minute's Warning a Woman whom he does not like, and whom the Father chuses only with the fordid View of doubling a great Estate, when what they had already was more than sufficient: Because the Father is fordid, must the Son be unhappy? Must the Son, who has bespoke a Dish for himself, take up with another that is his Aversion, only because his Father chooses it? The Passion which young *Bevil* had for another, is a just Cause of his Refusal; and if his Father is unreasonably offended, the Son, who has no Dependance upon him, may very reasonably be comforted. As the Father knew very well that the Son had no Occasion for the Wealth which would come from the marrying *Lucinda*, so he did not believe his frequenting *Indiana*, whether he suppos'd her an honorable

nable or a kept Mistress, would bring any Scandal either upon himself or his Family. Witness what he says to *Sealand* in *Act 4* *Page 62* concerning this very Affair, viz. *Sir, I can't help saying, that what might injure a Citizen's Credit may be no Stain to a Gentleman's Honour.* So that 'tis plain *Simo* had two important Reasons to be offended at his Son's Refusal, which old *Bevil* apparently had not; because he rejected Wealth, which he wanted; and courted Infamy, for which no one can have an Occasion.

The Relation of what passed between young *Bevil* and *Indiana* at the Masquerade, is a very absurd Imitation of what passed between *Pamphilus* and *Glycerium* at the Funeral of *Chrysis*. *Pamphilus* attends *Glycerium* to the Funeral of *Chrysis*, who pass'd for her Sister. While the Body was burning, *Glycerium* in the Agony of her Grief, ran to the Fire, and was about to throw herself into it, when *Pamphilus*, half dead with Fear, runs to her, catches hold of her, throws his Arms about her, and by that Action, and his tender Expostulation discovers the Violence of that Passion which he had hitherto conceal'd; upon which *Glycerium*, by an Action which manifested her habitual Love, weeping reclin'd her Head upon his Breast with a most moving Tenderness. This is the Sense of that celebrated Passage: But is but

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barely

barely the Sense; for no Pen, no Tongue can express the Elegance and the Grace of *Terence*.

But now let us see the Imitation of this in the *Conscious Lovers*: 'Tis in the first Scene of the Play, where old *Bevil* relates to his Man *Humphrey* what passed at the last Masquerade.

Sir J. Bevil. You know, I was last Thursday at the Masquerade; my Son, you may remember, soon found us out. He knew his Grandfather's Habit, which I then wore; and tho' it was the Mode, in the last Age, yet the Maskers, you know, follow'd us as if we had been the most monstrous Figures in the whole Assembly.

Humphrey. I remember, indeed, a young Man of Quality in the Habit of a Clown, that was particularly troublesome.

Sir J. Bevil. Right: He was too much what he seemed to be.

Humphrey. I knew he had a Mind to come to that Particular. [Aside.

Sir J. Bevil. Ay, he followed us, till the Gentleman, who led the Lady in the Indian Mantle, presented that gay Creature to the Rustick, and bid him (like *Cymon* in the Fable) grow polite, by falling in Love, and let that worthy old Gentleman alone, meaning me. The Clown was not reform'd, but rudely persisted, and offer'd to force off my Mask; with that the Gentleman, throwing off his own, appear'd to be my Son; and in his Concern for me, tore off that of the Nobleman;

bleman; At this they seiz'd each other: The Company called the Guards, and in the Surprise the Lady swooned away; upon which my Son quitted his Adversary, and had now no Care but of the Lady; when raising her in his Arms, art thou gone, cried he, for ever --- Forbid it Heaven! ---- She revives at his known Voice, ---- and with the most familiar, tho' modest Gesture, hangs in Safety over his Shoulder, weeping; but wept as in the Arms of one before whom she could give herself a Loose, were she not under Observation: while she hides her Face in his Neck, he carefully conveys her from the Company.

Now there is this remarkable Difference between what pass'd at the Funeral, and what pass'd at the Masquerade, that every Thing that relates to the former, seems to be either necessary or profitable; and almost every Thing that relates to the latter, appears to be improbable. How injudicious an Imitation is the Behaviour of *Indiana* at the Masquerade, of the Behaviour of *Glycerium* at the Funeral. Nothing can be more natural than the Freedom which *Glycerium* takes with *Pamphilus*. She lov'd him, and was belov'd by him: She was betroth'd to him; She had no Reserve for him: The utmost Familiarities had pass'd between them: She was with Child by him, and expected every Day

that the Time of her being deliver'd was come.

The Case of *Indiana* is very different, and her Behaviour is very inconsistent with her Character; 'tis true, she was in Love with young *Bevil*, but doubted very much whether that Love was reciprocal; he had been so far from taking the same Liberty with her that *Pamphilus* had done with *Glycerium*, that his Behaviour had been always very respectful; and yet *Indiana* uses the same Familiarity upon this Occasion with him, that *Glycerium* at the Funeral does with *Pamphilus*; she revives at his known Voice, which she heard, it seems, after she had lost all her Senses, and comes from Death to Life upon it, like the dead Men in the *Rehearsal* at the Voice of Poet *Bays*, and with the most familiar, tho' modest Gesture, hangs in Safety over his Shoulder weeping, but wept as in the Arms of one before whom she could give herself a Loose, were she not under Observation; and while she hides her Face in his Neck, he carefully conveys her from the Company.

Now this Behaviour is by no means consistent with the Character of *Indiana*; familiar and modest are not in this Case very compatible; and then what does Sir *Richard* mean by *wept as in the Arms of one before whom she could give herself a Loose*? If these Words have any Meaning, I would fain know what it is.

In

CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

37

In this first Scene there is another very ridiculous Imitation of what *Simo* says to *Sofia* in the first Scene of the *Andria*.

Simo: *Et nunc id operam do, ut per falsas nuptias*

Vera objurgandi causa sit, si degenet.

Simul, sceleratus Davus si quid Consilii

Habet, ut consumat nunc, cum nihil obsint doli.

Quem ego credo manibus, pedibusque obnixè omnia

Facturum; magis id adeo, mihi ut incommo-
det,

Quàm ut obsequatur Gnato. Sof. Quapropter? Si Rogas?

Mala mens, malus animus -----

Nunc tuum est officium, has bene ut adsimules nuptias,

Perterrefacias Davum; observes filium,

Quid agat, quid cum illo consilii captet.

Thus have I gone thro' the whole Train of Incidents, which are a Heap of Absurdities and Inconsistences. I have partly likewise gone thro' the Character of young *Bevil*, who is made up of Contradictions. He is one who differs from himself as much as from the rest of the World. This Man of Conscience and of Religion is as arrant an Hypocrite as a certain Author. 'Tis indeed a pleasant Religion that never seizes a Man but when he is upon the Point either of Love
or

or Battle: This Man of Conscience and of Religion dissembles with his Father most vilely, which Religion doth by no means allow, and so chuses rather to offend Heaven than an old fordid Blockhead, who pretends to treat one who is independent of him, and at Years of Discretion, like an arrant Boy; yet this the Son calls an honest Dissimulation, as he calls Breach of Trust the getting over a false Point of Honour. In the first Scene of the second Act this Man of Religion is putting *Myrtle* upon a Fraud, and palming two counterfeit Lawyers upon old Mrs. *Sealand*, a Practice which Religion and Morality both abhor.

x The Character of young *Bevil* therefore is made up of Qualities, either incoherent and contradictory, as Religion and Dissimulation, Morality and Fraud; or most ridiculously consistent, as Circumspection and Folly. For one may say the same thing of young *Bevil* that *Scandal* in *Love for Love* says of and to *Foresight*, *That if ever he commits an Error, 'tis not without a great deal of Consideration, Circumspection and Caution.* The Character therefore of young *Bevil* is not an Image of any thing in Life, and especially in common Life, as every thing in Comedy ought to be, but the Phantom of a feverish Author's Brain, as several of the other Characters likewise are.

As

As young *Bevil* is the Character of such a young Man as is not to be found in the World, upon the foot of Nature, of which all true Poetry is a just Imitation, *Cimberton* is a Creature who is set as much below Humanity as *Bevil* appears to be drawn above it; he is an Animal that is nothing so like a Man as a Monkey is, nor is he near so well qualified to entertain a Lady agreeably; he is so very monstrous, that one would not think he could be produced by any thing that had human Shape, and for the Credit of Human Nature ought, like a *Sooterkin*, to be demolished as soon as he appears.

Most of the other Characters are faintly and coarsely drawn, which is very strange, if we consider the admirable Patterns that *Terence* has laid before him. The Characters of that Comick Poet I must confess are in no great Compass, but tho' they are few they are excellent; they are so strong in Nature, that they may be taken for the Life, may be taken for Persons rather than Pictures, and for real rather than dramatick Persons. Sir *Richard* seems to be wholly ignorant of what *Boileau* has said of this Matter, who is one of the greatest of the *French* Poets, and one of the justest of their Criticks.

*Aux depens du bon Sens gardez de plaisanter.
Jamais de la Nature il ne faut s'ecarter.
Contemplez*

*Contemplez de quel Air un pere dans Terence
Vient d'un Fils amoureux gourmander l'im-
prudence :*

*De quel Air cet Amant ecoute ses leçons
Et court chez sa Maistresse oublier ces chan-
çons ;*

*Ce n'est pas un portrait, une image semblable,
C'est un Amant, un Fils, un Pere veritable.*

That is,

*Beware of being pleasant at the Expence
of good Sense, and take care that you never
go out of Nature. Observe with what an
Air a Father in Terence reprimands his a-
morous Son for his imprudent Conduct, with
what Air the Lover hearkens to his grave
Remonstrances, then runs away to his Mi-
stress to laugh at these musty Morals. You
would swear that you had before you the
Things themselves, instead of a good Picture
and a just Resemblance ; you would swear
you had before you a real Lover, a real Son,
and a real Father.*

The very Character of *Simo* in the *Andria*
is admirable, and the Relation he makes to
Sofia a Masterpiece ; I never read it but I see
the old *Athenian* before my Eyes in the very
same Colours that *Davus* paints *Crito* the
Andrian in the same Comedy.

*Cum faciem videas, videtur esse quantivis
pretii,*

*Tristis severitas inest in vultu, atq; in verbis
fides.*

Whatever

Whatever he says goes to my Heart; whereas old *Bevil* is an old fribling Block-head, and that which comes from him scarce touches my Lips.

But if in this Imitation of that Relation which *Simo* makes to *Sofia*, Sir *Richard* falls so very much short of *Terence* in his Incidents and his Characters, he is inexpressible Degrees below him in his Sentiments and his Dialogue.

The Sentiments of *Terence* are always true, are always just, and adapted to the Characters; His Dialogue is the most charming that is to be found among the *Roman* Authors: Where is there that Purity, that Elegance, that Delicacy, that Grace, that Harmony? If it has any Fault, 'tis too uniform a Politeness; the Servant speaking always with the same Grace and the same Elegance that his Master does. Setting that aside, 'tis every way accomplish'd: It has particularly for its Purity the Authorities of two of the best and greatest of the *Roman* Judges, *Cæsar* and *Cicero*. *Cicero* says of this Comick Poet, that he is *optimus Author Latinitatis*; and all the World has seen the Verses that *Julius Cæsar* made upon the same Author.

*Tuque etiam in summis o Dimidiate Menander
Poneris, & merito puri sermonis amator, &c.*

G

But

But now the Sentiments in the *Conscious Lovers* are often frivolous, false, and absurd; the Dialogue is awkward, clumsy, and spiritless; the Diction affected, impure, and barbarous, and too often *Hibernian*. Who, that is concern'd for the Honour of his Country, can see without Indignation whole Crowds of his Countrymen assembled to hear a Parcel of *Teagues* talking *Tipperary* together, and applauding what they say. I know very well that what I now say will alarm some People, and for that reason I shall shortly bring Examples of the Sentiments and the Diction in the *Conscious Lovers* so palpable and so flagrant, that they shall justify me in spite of the Obstinacy and the Clamours of his most foolish Admirers.

F I N I S.

